

It's National Influenza Vaccination Week – The Flu Ends With U

Overview

National Influenza Vaccination Week 2010 (NIVW), December 5 – 11, will provide an opportunity for public health professionals, health care professionals, health advocates, communities, and families from across the country to work together to promote flu vaccination before the traditional winter peak in flu activity. Flu seasons are unpredictable and can begin early in the fall and last late into the spring. By focusing on one week in early December, partners can bring together resources and reach people before flu season swings into full gear.

Launched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2005, each day of NIVW focuses on reaching a different part of the U.S. population. This is the first year that everyone 6 months and older is recommended to receive an annual flu vaccine. Therefore, a big part of NIVW this season will be to reach people of all ages with the message that “Flu Ends With U,” and that getting vaccinated not only protects you from the flu, but it can prevent you from spreading it to friends and family as well.

Sunday, December 5 – NIVW Kick-off, General Public – Sunday will kick-off NIVW this year. Key partners for the first day of NIVW include the faith-based community, the NFL, and pharmacies and grocery stores, which often offer flu vaccine on Sundays. Partners will encourage people to get vaccinated that day, before they get caught up in their busy weekly schedules.

Monday, December 6 – Families – Families are great at sharing. This is usually a good thing, except for when it comes to the flu. By making sure everyone in your family gets vaccinated, flu won't be one of the things your family shares this season. Family Vaccination Day will highlight the importance of flu vaccination for pregnant women, children, and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age. This is necessary because, by getting a flu shot during pregnancy, moms-to-be can reduce the risk of influenza for themselves and their baby after he or she is born. Children of all ages are at increased risk of influenza illness. Getting the flu can cause them to miss school and activities, and sometime result in hospitalization or, even death.

Tuesday, December 7 – People with Certain Chronic Medical Conditions – People with certain chronic medical conditions are at high risk of serious influenza-related complications. These high-risk conditions include asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney and liver disorders, neurological disorders, blood disorders, morbid obesity, HIV or AIDS, and cancer. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are a few examples of flu-related complications. The flu can also worsen chronic health problems. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and a flu infection can cause blood sugar to fluctuate uncontrollably in people with diabetes.

Wednesday, December 8 – Employee Health – Many adults spend the majority of their waking hours at work, and flu can spread rapidly through an office or workplace causing illness and lost productivity. People working in health care settings are among those at greatest risk of getting and spreading flu, often to vulnerable populations. Employee Health Day will remind employers that protecting employee health protects the bottom line.

Thursday, December 9 – Older Adults (65+) – People age 65 and older are at increased risk for complications from flu and should get a yearly flu shot. People 65 years of age and older have some of the highest rates of hospitalization and death as a result of influenza infection. Vaccination is the best protection for older adults against influenza and influenza-related complications.

Friday, December 10 – Young Adults (19-24) – Young adults were hit particularly hard by the H1N1 flu virus that caused so much illness last flu season. This virus is expected to continue circulating during the 2010-2011 flu season, along with other influenza viruses. Once infected themselves, young adults may spread flu to friends and family who are at high risk of flu complications. Vaccination is important for their health and for the health of those around them.

For more information about NIVW and how you can get involved, visit the <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/>.